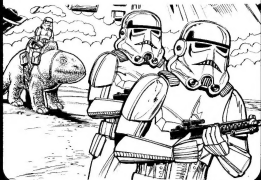


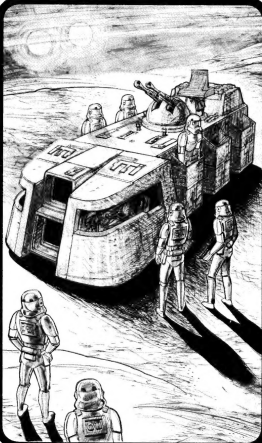


Darth Vader's™ final orders crackled through each Trooper's headset. The words were chillingly clear, "Either come back with the plans or don't come back at all!"

It seemed impossible! Two mindless *droids*™ had made off with design prints of the Empire's most devastating weapon...*Death Star!*™

As the search squad left the Imperial Cruiser, a report came through from the on-board Scanning Stations. The *droids*' Escape Pod had been tracked to an arid region on Tatooine known as the Central Lowlands. The exact ground position had been lost as the Pod went beyond the Scanner's range, but, in all that sand, a metal Pod should not be hard to find, not with the *Imperial Troop Transporter!*™

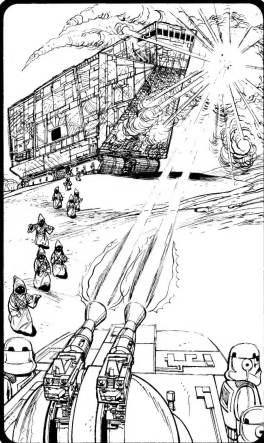




Landing at pre-set coordinates, the *Troop Transporter of the Imperial Empire* was there to meet them...long, sleek, deadly, with the Imperial Crest over the side hatches. The great, steel blue craft was operated by two drivers and could hold all six members of the search squad. Each Trooper entered a Traveling Rack on the side of the Transporter. They rode standing up in individual racks since their white and black armor made it almost impossible to sit. The rear of the vehicle contained a Prisoner Immobilization Unit for the detention and taming of renegade droids. And, for heavy resistance, there was always the Laser Blaster mounted on the upper deck. Even at night, the Transporter looked fearsome with the glare of its black, flip-up lights.

One driver reported that *Dewback™* ground units had spotted the Pod just a short distance to the north. Not bad for a *Dewback* outfit! But, the Transporter would take over the search from that point. It could cover twice the distance in half the time.

The Transporter hovered a few feet above the surface and sped to the Pod landing sight, but the droids and the plans had long since gone. They

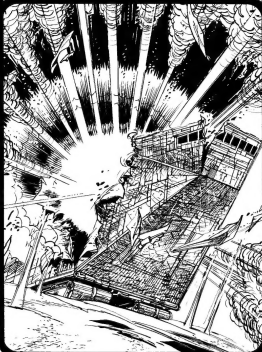


left only two sets of tracks in the sand that were spared by the mid-day winds. The *Dewback* had already gone after one set of tracks. The Transporter locked onto the other set and headed east.

The Surface Scanner in the Transporter soon picked up an old Class "D" transport slogging through the sand. Something the *Jawas*™ called a *Sandcrawler*.™ Over the external sound system, they were ordered to halt in the name of the Empire. They kept moving. Two rounds were fired across the *Sandcrawler* bow from the 50 megatome Blaster on the upper deck. The *Jawas* stopped and came out to greet the Imperial boarding party.

They had many *droids* in their inventory, but not the ones *Darth Vader* wanted back. Two *droids* were looted from the cargo bay and placed in the *Droid Prisoner Compartment* for further "questioning". A sale had been recorded to one Owen Skywalker of two *droids* for his moisture farm. That's all the Troop Commander had to hear. The order was given to open fire and the *Jawas* were cut down in mid-step... defenseless.

As the *Transporter* left to find the Skywalker farm, the heavy gun fired once at the Sandcrawler's mid-section. It exploded and burst into flames.



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